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EDITORIAL NOTES.

With the remarkable successes in aerial navigation, comes the news that the Wright brothers are to begin suit against their rival, Curtiss, for infringement of patent. **A VICTIM TO DUTY.** The statement is of more than passing interest because it brings to mind the fact that not only fame and honor attend discoveries in the mechanic-arts, but great wealth as well. Mechanics furnishes every incentive to the investigator. How different is it in the field of medicine, where he who is not satisfied to follow in beaten paths receives but scant assistance in hewing out new trails. Even when his work is done—when some great and important discovery has crowned his efforts and his associates have been convinced of its utility and worth—his reward seems most meagre. The names of the navigators of the air are on every tongue, yet the men of the Army Medical Commission, who identified the stegomyia as the carrier of yellow fever, a discovery which has been one of the greatest boons to humanity, are known but to a few; Reed, Carroll, Lazear, Agaramonte—the value of their work will at some time be appreciated by an indifferent public. In medicine the reward must come from within; from a consciousness of work well done, of theories proved and facts demonstrated, and after all there can be no greater satisfaction than this.

In May of this year a Californian sacrificed his life in the pursuit of duty. Dr. William Martin Wightman of the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service died at Guayaquil, Ecuador, of yellow fever. Graduating from Cooper

Medical College in 1899 he served as an intern in the Marine Hospital for a year and later entered the service. He was a thorough and conscientious student and his genial disposition and excellent qualities won him a host of friends. He was engaged for a time in quarantine work in San Francisco and became a member of the County Medical Society. The qualities which had distinguished him as a student ripened with the years, and he became a competent and painstaking officer. His work was his life for his heart was in it and his details were done with that promptness and cheerfulness which characterize the physician of high ideals. He had a sterling character and his sunny temperament reflected on all who came within its sphere; his life was an inspiration to those who worked with him. It is strange that such a man, so much needed by his fellows, should be signaled out to die. He was a victim to duty; he gave his life to the cause of preventive medicine and added another name to the long list of heroes of his service. A self-absorbed public neither knows nor cares of Wightman's life or his ill-timed death. It is only in his own corps, among the men who so often place their lives at hazard in following the path of duty, that his name, his work and his character cannot be forgotten.

The work of the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service in uncovering and outlining the focus of **GROUND SQUIRRELS AND PLAGUE.** squirrel plague in California marks one of the

greatest advances which has been made by Preventive Medicine in the last decade. During recent years each summer has been marked by the occurrence of one or two human plague cases in Contra Costa or Alameda counties. It has been known for several years that an epizootic was spreading among the ground squirrels of that region, and it was suspected that this epizootic was bubonic plague and that the human cases received their infection from this source. This, however, was entirely a matter of conjecture until the summer of 1908, when four plague infected squirrels were found. Several officers of the Public Health Service had previously worked out the susceptibility of the ground squirrel to bubonic plague, but these were the first natural plague infected squirrels reported. Following up this lead Surgeon Rupert Blue began an active campaign in Contra Costa county in the spring of 1909. This has yielded results of the greatest importance from a scientific standpoint and has placed the pathology of natural plague among ground squirrels upon a solid basis. In fact, this phase of the work is as epoch-making as that of the British Commission in India with the rat. Thus far, infection has been found in almost every place in which men have been placed at work, a total of some two hundred odd infected squirrels having been found. These were not confined to Contra Costa county, but were also found in Alameda county where it may be remarked, en